

WITH GOLDEN GIRDLE GIRT NO. 3555

A SERMON
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DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON
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He was "*girt about the paps with a golden girdle.*"
Revelation 1:13

BE assured, my brethren, the more real Jesus Christ is to us the more power there will be in our religion. Those men whose religion lies in believing certain doctrines, and contending for certain modes of expression, may be strong enough in bigotry, but they often fail entirely in developing the spirit of true Christianity. There may be minds so constituted that they can live under the power of an idea, and they might possibly be able to die for it. But these, I think, must be comparatively few.

To draw out enthusiasm among men, there must generally be a man as leader and commander in whom the people can implicitly trust, to whom they will voluntarily tender obedience. *Individual men* have wrought wonders. The thoughts which they incarnated may have been in themselves strong, yet their strength was never so forcible as when the men who represented those thoughts were present to give them currency. Then the blood of the many was stirred, and every man's heart beat high.

The presence of Oliver Cromwell in a regiment was equal to any ten thousand men. He had only to appear, and all his soldiers felt so sure of victory, they would dash upon the cavaliers as some mighty tornado, driving them like chaff before the wind. The presence of Napoleon at any moment in a battle was almost sufficient to turn the scale. Let but "the little corporal" appear and wave his sword, and men seemed to lose all sense of their own personal danger and rushed into the very mouth of death to gain the victory.

In those old days of the Huguenots, when they were warring for their liberties, what shouts there were, what beating of hearts, what a clamor of trumpets, what exultation, when Henry of Navarre came riding down the ranks! Then each man felt he had a giant's arm, and as he rode to battle, struck home for God and for the truth as he gave out his watchword, "Remember St. Bartholomew!"

Now the force of the religion of Jesus, under God the Holy Spirit, it seems to me, is never fully brought out except when our faith greets the Lord Jesus Christ as a person, and holds to Him as a personal leader and commander, loving Him and devoting ourselves to Him as an ever-living, ever-gracious Friend. It is not by believing a set of ideas and trying to be enthusiastic over them, that our courage rises or our prowess succeeds. Rather let us feel His presence, though we cannot see His face, and remembering that there is such a one as Jesus of Nazareth, who became a babe in Bethlehem for us, who lived, and toiled, and suffered for us, then laid bare His chest to the spear, and gave up His life for us.

We grow strong when we thus think of Him as our Savior, when His thorn-crowned head rises before our mind's eye, when we look into that face so marred with shame, and pain, and cruelty, till we are compelled to cry out, "Oh! my Savior, I love You, and for the love I bear Your name would fain learn what I can do to honor You, and I will do it. Point out to me how much of my substance I should place upon Your altar, and I will be glad to place it there, put me into the place of suffering, if needs be, and I will account it a place of honor, for if You be there, I can look into Your dear face, and think that I am suffering for You, fire shall be then like a bed of roses to me, and death itself seem sweeter far than life."

We want to have more open testimony concerning the person of our Lord Jesus Christ, I am persuaded of that, and we have need, as private Christians, to live more in fellowship with Him, the Son

of God, the Man Christ Jesus, who has redeemed us from wrath, and through whose life we live. To Him now—to Him exclusively let all your thoughts be turned.

Oh! that you may discern the image which stood on that Lord's Day clearly before the view of John, the eyes of your understanding being opened, and your whole soul being attentive to the revelation. It is but one part of John's description of our Lord Jesus Christ in heaven to which I propose to direct your attention. "He was girt about the breast a golden girdle." What did this golden girdle signify? And what are the *golden lessons* to be gathered from it?

I. THE GOLDEN GIRDLE.

What did it mean? It was designed, first, *to set forth our Lord's excellence in all His offices*. He is a prophet. The prophets of old were often girt about with leather girdles, but our Savior wears a golden girdle, for He, above all other prophets, is vested with authority. What He declares and testifies is true, yea, it is the pure truth, unalloyed with tradition or superstition. He makes no mistakes. There is no treachery to taint His teaching. Sitting at His feet, you may accept every word He utters as infallible. You need not raise a question about it. The girdle of golden truth is round about Him.

He is also a priest. The high priest of old wore a girdle of many colors for glory and for beauty. Our Lord Jesus Christ wears a girdle superior to this. It is of the purest gold, for among the priests He has no peer. Of all the sons of Aaron, none could vie with Him. They must first offer a sacrifice for their own sins. They needed to wash their feet in the laver, and to be themselves touched with the cleansing blood. But Jesus Christ is without spot, or blemish, or any such thing.

*"Their priesthood ran through several bands,
For mortal was their race."*

But Jesus is immortal, and about Him He wears the golden girdle to show that He excels all the priests of Aaron's line. As for those persons who, in modern times, pretend to be priests, our Lord Jesus Christ is not to be mentioned in the same day with them. They are all deceivers. If they knew the truth, they would understand that there is no class of priests now. All caste of priesthood is forever abolished. Every man that fears God, and every woman too, is a priest, according to the Word which is written, "He hath made us kings and priests unto God."

The priesthood is common to all the saints, and not confined to some. But He wears a golden girdle among them. Their priesthood would be nothing without His. He has made them priests. They derive their priesthood entirely from Him, neither could they be acceptable before God if they were not accepted in the Beloved. He is a King as well as a prophet and a priest, and that girdle, being made of gold, signifies His supremacy over all other kings. He is mightier far than they, "The LORD mighty in battle." "King of kings" is His name, and the burden of the music of heaven is this, "King of kings, and Lord of lords."

The day shall come when He shall grasp His scepter and break the kingdoms of earth like potters' vessels with His rod of iron. He is this day King of the Jews, but He shall openly be so proclaimed. In that day kings shall bow down before Him, and He shall gather up sheaves of scepters, while many crowns shall be upon His glorious brow. There is no kingdom like the kingdom of Christ. Other kingdoms come and go like the hoar-frost of the morning, or the sheen upon the midnight waves, but His kingdom stands forever and ever, it shall endure from everlasting to everlasting. As Prophet, Priest, and King, He wears a girdle of gold to show His supremacy in office above all others.

The golden girdle, moreover, bears witness to *His power and authority*. Men were often girt with girdles when they received office. The prophet Isaiah said of Eliakim that he received a girdle of power and dominion. Keys were hung upon the girdle. The housewife's girdle with her keys signified her authority over her servants. The keys at the girdle of great men signified their power in their various offices, and when we sometimes sing—

*“Lo, in His hand the sovereign keys
Of heaven, and death, and hell,”*

we recognize this meaning of Christ's golden girdle, that all power is given unto Him in heaven and in earth. He is the universal Lord. Up in heaven, He enjoys an authority that is undisputed. Angels bow before Him, and on the sea of glass they cast down their crowns and cry, “Hallelujah.” Here on earth all providence is ruled by the man whose hand was pierced.

All this dispensation is an economy of mediatorial government, over which Jesus Christ presides. He puts down one and sets up another. He makes the wheels of providence revolve. Everything occurs according to His decree and purpose, in all things He rules, and He overrules them for the good of His church, even as Joseph governed Egypt for the good of the seed of Abraham.

What a comfort it is, beloved, for us to think of the authority and the power of our Lord Jesus Christ! He who had not where to lay His head, He who was despised and rejected of men, He who was a working man—the carpenter's son, He who felt the pangs of hunger, and endured the pains of weariness, He who was neglected, condemned, opposed, and cast out by His countrymen and His kinsmen—it is He who is now undisputed Master and unrivalled Lord everywhere. No name so famous as that one once branded with infamy, the name of Jesus. Whom sinful men rejected, holy angels now adore.

On earth He was condemned and crucified, in heaven He is hailed with highest honor. Look up to that golden girdle. See how He descended, step by step, into the meanest depths of humiliation, then mark how He ascended with rapid flight to the towering heights of exaltation. Follow Him. With Him take your lot. Be willing to be made of no repute in this day of reproach that you may be a partaker of His glory in the day of His appearing.

Girt thus about with a golden girdle, we have a vivid representation of *His activity*. The girdle was used by the Easterns to bind up their long flowing robes. The Hebrew did not usually wear a girdle indoors. It was only when on a journey, or when engaged in some manual labor that he thus adjusted his attire. So our Lord's having a golden girdle signifies that He is still ready to serve His servants, to engage on their behalf. You remember how He once took a towel and girded Himself. That was with kind intent to wash their feet.

Now it is no more with a linen towel, but with a girdle of gold that He prepares Himself to work on the behalf of His beloved. He stands not in heaven with flowing garments, as though all work were done, but He stands there girt about the breast that He may be ready still and show Himself strong on behalf of His people. Be this your comfort now, Jesus has not forgotten to plead for you before His Father's throne. He never holds His peace, and never will.

As long as you have a cause to plead, Christ will be your intercessor. Whatsoever you want, He is waiting to supply. As long as you have a sin to confess, Christ will be your advocate with the Father to purge your guilt and purify your souls. As long as you are persecuted on earth, there will be a Christ to represent you in heaven. As long as you are in this vale of tears, He, with a golden girdle girt, will be the angel of God's presence to succor and to save you. In all your afflictions He was afflicted, and He will still bear and carry you as in the days of old. Oh! my brethren, how people do sometimes talk about the Christian church, as if Jesus Christ, who died for us, were still dead!

What gloomy forebodings I have read during the last few months! Not that I have believed a word or taken dreams for disasters. I have not even credited their sadness with over-much sincerity. I rather thought they wrote for a party purpose, with motives of policy. Were we to believe half we read, Protestantism, in a few years, would become no more. We might have the Pope preaching in St. Paul's Cathedral. Not a few would be doomed to burn in Smithfield, and we know not what pains and penalties we shall be subject to. Evidently the church of Christ is quite unable to take care of herself. Unless she is provided with so many hundreds or thousands of pounds, she must go to the dogs, for money, the love of which used to be the root of all evil, somehow or other, is now found out to be the root of all good.

As for the good men who have prayed earnestly and worked so zealously, they are all going to leave off praying, and preaching too, when the State pay is stopped. So all the piety towards God, and all the good will towards men, will come to an end. Well, I suppose this would be very likely if Jesus Christ were dead, but as long as He is alive, I think He is quite able to take care of the golden candlesticks Himself, and the church of God will probably be no worse in the next few years than it has been in the years that have passed. Nay, I will venture to prophesy that the less help she seeks from the world, and the more she leans upon her God, the brighter will her future be.

Should the very foundations of society be shaken, and the worst calamities befall us, such as we hope will never come, yet over the ashes of all earthly renown and government patronage, the supernal splendor of the immortal church of God would glow forth with clearer brilliance and brighter glory. Long has she been like a ship tossed with tempest, and not comforted. She has ploughed her way, and the spray that has broken over her has been blood-red with martyr's gore, but she has still kept on her course towards her desired haven. He that is with her is greater than all they that are against her. So shall it be till the world's end.

Look, then, beloved, to the golden girdle of our Lord Jesus Christ, and as you perceive that He is still active to maintain His own cause, to deliver His people and to prosper His church, you need not be afraid. And does not the golden girdle imply His enduring love? The breast was of old time, and still is among ourselves, supposed to be the dwelling place of the affections. What, think you, is the ruling passion in the heart of Christ? What is it that inflames the bosom of Him who was once the Man of Sorrows, but now is King of kings and Lord of lords? He is girt about the breast with a girdle of gold. He never ceases to love His people.

The girdle is an endless thing, it goes right round a man. Christ's heart always keeps within the sacred circle of undiminished, unchanging, undying affection for all whom His Father gave Him, for all whom He bought with His precious blood. Never doubt the faithfulness of Christ to you, beloved, since faithfulness is the girdle of His loins. Never think that a promise will fail, or that the covenant will be broken. Trusting in Him, you will never be suffered to perish. It cannot be.

While He wears that golden girdle, He cannot prove faithless. That heavenly decoration is a goodly order. Invested therewith, He cannot forget or prove untrue to those whom He has engaged to protect. Though heaven and earth shall pass away, not one word of grace shall fall to the ground. The sun and moon shall expire, dim with age, they will cease to shed their light abroad, but the love of Jesus Christ shall be as fresh and new as in the day of His espousals, and as delicious as when you first tasted of it. Yours shall it be forever and ever to inherit and enjoy.

In days of yore, moreover, *the girdle was the place where the Eastern kept his money*, it was his purse. Some of the Orientals keep their cash in their turbans. In our Savior's day it was carried in the girdle. When our Lord speaks in Matthew about His disciples going without purse or scrip, He mentions there that they are not to carry silver or gold in their girdles. This golden girdle, then to use a simple word, may represent the purse of the Lord Jesus, and we infer from its being golden that it is full of wealth unequalled and riches unsurpassed.

Jesus Christ bears about Him all the available supplies that can be needed by His people. What a multitude of people He has to support, for on Him all His saints do depend. They have been drawing upon Him all their lives long, and so they always will. They are "gentlemen commoners," as one used to say, upon the bounty of God's providence. We are pensioners upon the beneficence of our Lord Jesus Christ, He has supplied us hitherto until now.

Oh! how much grace you and I have wanted to keep us from starving, from sinking, from going down to the pit! And we have had all we needed! In fearful temptations our foot has not slipped. We have passed through many trials, but without being crushed. Arduous has been our service, but as our day, our strength has been. We should long ago have broken any earthly bank, and drained the exchequer, but Christ has been to us like an ever-flowing fountain, a wellhead, a redundant source

communicating enough and to spare. What a purse! What ready relief for every emergency Christ has ever at command!

Oh! brethren, have you little grace? Whose fault is it? Not your Lord's. Oh! you who have no spending money! you who are full of doubts and fears! you who have slender comfort and little joy! you who are saying, like the elder son in the parable, "Thou never gavest me a kid that I might make merry with my friends"!—whose fault is it? Does not your Father say, "Son, thou art ever with me, and all that I have is thine"?

If you are poor in spiritual things, you made yourselves poor, since Christ is yours, and with Him all things are yours. Do enjoy what God has given you. Take the good that God provides. Seek to live up to your privileges. Rejoice in the Lord always, and again I say, rejoice! As that golden girdle gleams from afar, say in your spirit—

*"Since Christ is rich, can I be poor?
What can I want besides?"*

And now let me briefly point out to you—

II. THE GOLDEN LESSONS to be gathered from these five meanings of the golden girdle.

It will refresh your memories if I remind you that we showed how the golden girdle set forth the excellency of Christ in all His offices. The golden lesson, then, is—*Admire Him in all His offices*. He that loves Christ will never be tired of hearing about Him. Doubtless when Jacob's sons came back and told him that Joseph was lord over all Egypt, after hearing the story once, the old man would be sure to say, "Oh! tell me that again!" I will be bound to say that as he sat in that tent of his, he would ask first one and then another to tell the tale, so would he try to pump them with questions.

"Tell me, Judah, now how did he look? Has he grown stouter or thinner since the day he left me, and I never thought to see or hear of him anymore? Tell me, Simeon, did he sit on a throne? Was he really like a king? Tell me, Levi, what did the Egyptians seem to think of him? Had they a high estimation of his character? Tell me, Zebulon, how did he speak? In what terms did he speak of his old father? Was there a tear in his eye when he referred to Benjamin, your other brother, the little one whom his father would not spare?"

Surely I might draw that picture without being suspected of exaggeration. It would be all true. He loved his son so dearly and doted upon him so fondly that he could not know too much, nay, he could not know enough about him. Anybody that had anything to tell about Joseph would be sure to be welcome. So with every renewed heart. If there is anything to be learned about Jesus, you will want to know it.

Dear brethren, let us cultivate this spirit more and more. Let us live in the study of the life of Jesus. These are things the angels desire to look into. Do you not desire to look into them too? Watch your Master. Let your experience, as it alters and ripens, reveal to you fresh beauties in your Lord. As you turn over page after page of Scripture, search after Jesus in it as men search after gold and be not content unless you see your Savior's face revealed on every page.

Does the golden girdle indicate His power and authority? The golden lesson is that you *trust* Him. If all power is His, lean on Him. We do not lean on Christ enough. The remark of the church was, "Who is this that cometh up from the wilderness, leaning on her beloved?" Lean on Him. He will never sink under your weight. All the burdens that men ever had to carry, Christ carried, and He certainly will carry yours. There can be no wars and lightings that perplex you which did not perplex Him, for in the great fight which comprehended yourselves, and the great warfare for all His saints, He overcame. Nothing, then, can be difficult to Him.

How often we weary ourselves with walking when we might ride—I mean, we carry our troubles when we might take them to Christ. We fret, and groan, and cry, and our difficulties do not get any the less, but when we leave them with Him who cares for us, and begin to trust, like a child trusts its father,

how light of heart and how strong of spirit we become! The Lord give us to watch that golden girdle carefully, and as we see the power of Jesus Christ may we come to lean upon that power and trust Him at all times.

Or did the golden girdle signify His activity? The golden lesson is that *we imitate Him*. Christ is in heaven, and yet He wears a girdle. Christian, always keep your girdle round your loins. “Stand, therefore, with your loins girt about,” says the apostle, “and your lamps trimmed.” This is not the place for the Christian to unbind. Heaven is the place of rest for us, not this world of temptation and of sin. Still, stand ready to suffer or to serve. At the Master’s gate watch and wait to do His bidding. Never, on weekdays, and much less on Sabbath days, let your spirits be out of order for Christian service. We ought so to live that if called to die at any minute, we should not need to say a prayer—ready for heaven, ready for a life of service or for a death of glory.

The true way for a Christian to live in this world is to be always as he would wish to be if Christ came at that moment, and there is a way of living that style—simply depending upon the blood and righteousness of Jesus Christ, and then going out into daily service for Him, moved by love to Him, saying to Him, “Lord, show me what thou would have me do.” I wish we always were as I have thus said we always should be. The Lord can teach us, let us ask Him to teach us the lesson.

We told you, moreover, that the golden girdle indicated His enduring love, inasmuch as it is girt about His breast. Well, then, the golden lesson is, *let us love Him in return*. Let us wear the golden girdle too. Oh! beloved, love Him with all your heart, and soul, and strength. Let no rival come between you and Jesus. Keep your heart chaste for the Well-beloved. My greatest longing is that I may present you as a chaste virgin unto Christ, that there may be nothing by way of error in respect to doctrine or to holiness of life that may disturb the full union of your souls with Jesus.

Oh! to see that golden girdle, and as we see it to feel that He has belted us about after the self-same manner! “I am my beloved’s, and my beloved is mine.” I am not the world’s, nor is the world for me, but I belong to Jesus, and Jesus belongs to me. May that be the deep feeling and the truthful expression of every one of you.

And then does the golden girdle suggest to us the wealth of Christ, as being His purse, let it be our golden lesson *to rejoice in Him*. If He be so rich, and all that He is, and all that He has belongs to us, bring hither your choicest music, and let your souls be glad in the name of the Lord. Why are you bowed down? Why distressed? Has your Lord withdrawn, or has He changed, is He deaf, or is His arm shortened that He cannot deliver?

Nay, but let the children of God be joyful in their King. If you cannot be glad in what is created, be glad in the Creator Himself. If you cannot drink of the streams, go and drink of the fountainhead, the water is sweeter and better there. Blessed wreck which makes us lose everything and cling to our God, for the loss will be a gain if we get nearer to God, love Him better, and prize His friendship more.

Ah! me, the day will come when those of you who do not love Christ will have to look on Him, and you will see that golden girdle then, but it will bring no comfort to you, you despised Him, hence in that girdle there will be no love to you, no blessing for you, no power for you. But what will there be? Why, that very girdle, since it is made of faithfulness, will show Him *faithful to His threatenings*.

Those who hear Christ preached and reject Him will find that word true, “He that believeth not shall be damned.” Nothing but condemnation can be the lot of the man who contemns pardon, and treats forgiveness with contempt. When simply to trust Christ saves the soul, to distrust Him is the direst and most damnable of sins. It is suicidal. Unbeliever, you refuse to pass through the only door that can lead you to heaven. Well, man, if you never enter there, your blood be on your own head.

Oh! that grace may lead you just now to seek salvation! The man with the golden girdle can save you, and none but He. Look to Him. Behold Him as He hangs upon the tree with hands and feet fastened there. Look and trust—trust and live. The Lord incline your hearts to espouse and not eschew His rich mercy, for His own dear name’s sake. Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON

MATTHEW 11

Verse 1. *And it came to pass, when Jesus had made an end of commanding his twelve disciples, he departed thence to teach and to preach in their cities.*

Whatever He commanded, He Himself did. He was always the example as well as the legislator of His people. How well it will be for us who are called upon to teach others, if we can teach them as much by what we do as by what we say! “When Jesus had made an end of commanding his twelve disciples, he departed thence to teach and to preach in their cities.”

2-3. *Now when John had heard in the prison the works of Christ, he sent two of his disciples, and said unto him, Art thou he that should come, or do we look for another?*

Poor John! His spirit was brave enough amid the wilds when he was by the riverside, but shut up in prison, it was probably otherwise with him. Those bold spirits, when they lose liberty, are apt to be depressed. Perhaps, too, John sent the disciples as much for their sakes as for his own. At any rate, what a question it was to put to our Lord, “Art thou he that should come, or do we look for another?” I would call your attention to the quietness of our Savior’s mind—the absence of anything like anger. See how He answers them.

4-6. *Jesus answered and said unto them, Go and shew John again those things which ye do hear and see: the blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them. And blessed is he, whosoever shall not be offended in me.*

Now if it had been the very least of us who had been attempting to do such service for God, and we had been questioned about what we were doing, should we not have felt hurt and aggrieved? And may be there are some that would not have deigned an answer, especially if they were dignified with the name of an office. But our blessed Lord does not take a huff at it. He is not vexed, but He answers with the utmost gentleness, not by a word of authority commanding John to believe, but by an exposition of those blessed seals of grace which were the best evidence that He was indeed the Messiah. He pointed to the very miracles which prophecy declared the Messiah would perform, and He did this with that suavity of temper which was ever about our Divine Master, in which let us copy Him.

7-11. *And as they departed, Jesus began to say unto the multitudes concerning John, What went ye out into the wilderness to see? A reed shaken with the wind? But what went ye out for to see? A man clothed in soft raiment? behold, they that wear soft clothing are in kings’ houses. But what went ye out for to see? A prophet? yea, I say unto you, and more than a prophet. For this is he, of whom it is written, Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee. Verily I say unto you, Among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist: notwithstanding he that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.*

Never did our Savior bear a more emphatic testimony to John than on this occasion, and it is remarkable that it should have followed upon the heels of John’s doubt and John’s question. How generously the Master repays His servant—not in his own coin, but in the heavenly coin of love. He seems to say, “Through the infirmity of your flesh you have been half-inclined to question Me, but through the strength of My grace I turn round and extol you. Time was when you could say, ‘He must increase, but I must decrease,’ and now I turn round and say to those whom you have sent, and to those who saw your messengers, that there is none like to you.” Not even Moses himself is greater than John the Baptist, though he that has entered into the light and the glory of the kingdom of grace, since the coming of the Master, is greater than he.

12-15. *And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force. For all the prophets and the law prophesied until John. And if ye will receive it, this is Elias, which was for to come. He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.*

But how many there are that have ears and do not hear! The external organ is affected, but the internal ear of the soul is not reached at all. Blessed are they who, having ears, do in very truth hear.

16-17. *But whereunto shall I liken this generation? It is like unto children sitting in the markets, and calling unto their fellows, and saying, We have piped unto you, and ye have not danced; we have mourned unto you, and ye have not lamented.*

The children would not agree. Whatever game was proposed, some of them would not follow it. At one time they imitated the pipers, and then the others would not dance. Then they imitated the lamentations of a funeral, and then the others would not join in them.

18-19. *For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, He hath a devil. The Son of man came eating and drinking, and they say, Behold a man gluttonous, and a winebibber, a friend of publicans and sinners.*

There was no pleasing them. And there is no pleasing people now, whoever it is that God sends. One man is much too homely. In fact, he is vulgar. Another is much too rhetorical. In fact, his rhetoric runs away with him. One man is doctrinal. Oh! he is dogmatical. Another man is practical. He is much too censorious. Another man is full of experience. He is mystical. Oh! surely God Himself cannot please the evil tempers of ungodly men. One thing is that He does not try to do so, nor do His servants, if they are truly sent of Him. That is a matter about which they have small concern.

19. *But wisdom is justified of her children.*

Whoever Christ sends, He sends in wisdom, and there is an adaptation about each of His servants, even if men do not perceive it. The day shall come when wisdom shall be justified of her children.

20-24. *Then began he to upbraid the cities wherein most of his mighty works were done, because they repented not: woe unto thee, Chorazin! woe unto thee, Bethsaida! for if the mighty works, which were done in you, had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. But I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the day of judgment, than for you. And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted unto heaven, shall be brought down to hell: for if the mighty works, which have been done in thee, had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day. But I say unto you, That it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment, than for thee.*

There was a tenderness about the tone of Christ when He spoke thus. The words are burning, but the eyes were full of tears. He could not contemplate the possibility of the Gospel being rejected without a broken heart. He sighed and cried as He bore testimony against those who refused eternal life. With what tenderness must Christ regard some that are present here tonight, whose privileges from their childhood until now have been so great that they could scarcely be greater, and yet they seem determined to reject the admonitions of love, and trample over tenderness in their desperate resolve to perish. God have mercy upon such.

25. *At that time Jesus answered—*

He seemed to answer Himself. He answered to the thoughts that passed through His own mind. “At that time Jesus answered.”

25-27. *And said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and have revealed them unto babes. Even so, Father: for so it seemed good in thy sight. All things are delivered unto me of my father: and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him.*

Did the Lord Jesus Christ in His address to Bethsaida and Capernaum awaken in His own mind all those difficulties that hover round about the doctrine of predestination? Did it not seem strange that God should send the Gospel to people who rejected it, and did not send the Gospel to a people who would have received it? How can these things be? And the dear Savior answers the question to His own mind by falling back upon that other truth sublime and to Him, full of thanksgiving—the infinite sovereignty of God.

I do not know what some of us would do if we did not believe that truth. There are so many things which puzzle us—so many questions, but the Judge of all the earth must do right. He must, He will do as He pleases with His own, and it is not for us to question the prerogatives of the Most High. Now the Savior at last seems to give vent to His soul in one grand burst of Gospel preaching. And whenever you and I get worried about any doctrine, it is always well to come back to the simplicity of the Gospel and proclaim it again.

28. *Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.*

There is no rest in the difficulties of metaphysics. There is no rest in the labors of human merit. “Come unto me, and I will give you rest.”

29. *Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls.*

First, He gives rest to all that come, but afterwards there is a second rest which they find who become obedient and bear His yoke. The rest that comes of pardoned sin is sweet, but the rest that comes of conquered sin through obedience is sweeter still. The rest He gives is precious, but there is rest upon rest, as there is grace upon grace, and let us go in for the highest form of that rest. “Ye shall find rest unto your souls.” The very innermost part of your being shall be full of peace.

30. *For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.*

Blessed be His name, we have found it so.

Taken from The C. H. Spurgeon Collection, Version 1.0, Ages Software. Only necessary changes have been made, such as correcting spelling errors, some punctuation usage, capitalization of deity pronouns, and minimal updating of a few archaic words. The content is unabridged. Additional Bible-based resources are available at www.spurgeongems.org.